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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Dissemination of information on decolonization during the period from April 2015 to March 2016

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 70/103, provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the Department of Public Information to disseminate information on decolonization, with particular emphasis on the options for self-determination available for the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Unless otherwise mentioned, it covers the period from April 2015 to March 2016.



I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 2 of its resolution 70/103, considered it important to continue and expand its efforts to ensure the widest possible dissemination of information on decolonization, with particular emphasis on the options for self-determination available for the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. To that end, it requested the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, through the United Nations information centres in the relevant regions, to actively engage and seek new and innovative ways to disseminate material to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In paragraph 3 of the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to further enhance the information provided on the United Nations decolonization website and to continue to include the full series of reports of the regional seminars on decolonization, the statements and scholarly papers presented at those seminars and links to the full series of reports on the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Special Committee on Decolonization). In paragraph 4, the Assembly requested the Department of Public Information to continue its efforts to update web-based information on the assistance programmes available to the Non-Self-Governing Territories, and in paragraph 5 it requested the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Public Information to implement the recommendations of the Special Committee on Decolonization and to continue their efforts to take measures through all media available, including publications, radio and television, as well as the Internet, to give publicity to the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization.

2. In fulfilling its mandate, the Department of Public Information worked closely with the Decolonization Unit of the Department of Political Affairs, among other relevant United Nations offices and entities.

3. The present report, prepared in response to that mandate, covers the period from April 2015 to March 2016.

II. 2015 regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism

4. The Special Committee on Decolonization held its annual regional seminar in Managua from 19 to 21 May 2015. The seminar was conducted within the framework of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2011-2020).

5. The Department of Public Information arranged for the deployment of a press officer from the Meetings Coverage Section in New York to cover the seminar. The press officer worked closely with the Decolonization Unit and provided media support and issued daily press releases, which were disseminated through the Department's various platforms and tools. In addition, an article was issued following the seminar in the Department of Political Affairs online publication *DPA*

Politically Speaking,¹ as well as in the Department's publication *Politically Speaking: 2015 in Review*.²

III. Coverage of issues before the General Assembly

6. During the reporting period, the Department issued a total of 33 press releases on issues related to decolonization in English and French, covering meetings, statements and hearings by various United Nations bodies, including the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) and the Special Committee on Decolonization.

7. The Press Service disseminated information about the meetings through media alerts and distributed statements from the meetings through the Media Documents Centre.

8. The Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit continued to provide accreditation and escort to media representatives covering the meetings of the Special Committee on Decolonization.

United Nations website and social media

9. The Department continued its efforts to maintain and update the web page "The United Nations and decolonization" (www.un.org/en/decolonization) in the six official languages. During the reporting period, the Department worked with the Decolonization Unit to update profiles for the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories, bringing their content up to the latest information in terms of data and numbers. Overall, the website attracted a growing number of visitors and registered nearly 345,000 page views during the period from January to December 2015. The table below shows the website traffic.

United Nations decolonization website traffic by language, 1 January-31 December 2015

Language	Sessions	Users	Page views	Pages per session
Arabic	4 401	4 509	7 300	1.66
Chinese	2 866	2 866	5 424	1.89
English	70 847	84 818	191 274	2.70
French	14 431	17 268	40 827	2.83
Russian	3 358	3 806	6 268	1.87
Spanish	39 955	43 236	93 618	2.34
Total	135 858	156 503	344 711	2.21

10. Activities and issues related to decolonization were also highlighted through other special web pages maintained by the Department, such as the "Global issues" web page (www.un.org/en/globalissues/decolonization).

¹ Available from <https://dpa-ps.atavist.com/un-at-70-taking-stock-of-decolonization>.

² Available from www.un.org/undpa/sites/www.un.org.undpa/files/EndYearPub_web.pdf.

11. The Department used its various social media accounts to raise awareness of decolonization issues and to drive traffic to the decolonization web page and other relevant web pages and events.

United Nations Television, Radio and Photo

12. United Nations Television covered formal open meetings of the Special Committee on Decolonization and related press conferences, as well as relevant sessions of the Fourth Committee, in addition to the adoption of the Fourth Committee's reports in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly. In addition, UNifeed provided two news packages to broadcasting partners.

13. Coverage of meetings, as well as of other events related to decolonization, was also made available live and on demand on the United Nations Web TV website (<http://webtv.un.org>), where a total of 41 videos on the subject are available to the public.

14. The United Nations Photo Unit covered a number of related events, including the General Assembly meetings on the report of the Fourth Committee, the Committee's final meeting at the seventieth session, and a meeting of its Bureau with the Secretary-General. Eighteen images were archived and stored in the United Nations Photo Library collection.

15. The United Nations Radio units continued to highlight activities of the United Nations on issues related to decolonization and to the Non-Self-Governing Territories, in the six official languages, as well as in Portuguese and Kiswahili. United Nations Radio also utilized its social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, to promote the subject.

United Nations News Centre

16. During the reporting period, the multilingual United Nations News Centre, one of the most popular segments of the wider United Nations website, highlighted issues pertaining to decolonization with higher frequency than usual, as the subject figured prominently in articles produced to draw attention to the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations. For example, the English and French United Nations News Centres together produced 34 news stories and features highlighting the subject. The articles were further disseminated through the rapidly growing social media platforms of both the United Nations News Centre and the main United Nations social media accounts. They were also distributed through the United Nations News Centre's e-mail-based news alerts service and RSS feeds and redissemated by online news aggregators.

IV. Visitors' Services

17. The topic of decolonization, including the roles of the Trusteeship Council and the Special Committee on Decolonization, was regularly included in the narrative of the guided tours of United Nations Headquarters in New York. Information provided by the tour guides in the Trusteeship Council Chamber focused on explaining to visitors the historical process of decolonization and recent developments. During the reporting period, 196,101 visitors took a guided tour at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

18. In 2015, the guided tour programme at the Palais des Nations in Geneva addressed 114,753 visitors on the role of the Trusteeship Council in the decolonization process, while a total of 3,092 visitors took a guided tour of the United Nations Office at Nairobi and learned about decolonization. Some 58,321 visitors took a tour of the United Nations Office at Vienna, which also featured decolonization as part of the tour.

V. Dag Hammarskjöld Library

19. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library continued to provide research and information services on decolonization and related issues on an ongoing basis. During the reporting period, the Library handled a series of requests for research and information services on the topic, including some 20 specific requests sent through the online "Ask Dag" platform (<http://ask.un.org>). The topic was also covered in the Library's online research guides, at <http://research.un.org>, where the keyword "decolonization" is mentioned 50 times; "colonies", 118 times; and "non-self-governing territories", 71 times. Several requests were received from States Members of the United Nations on the history of their decolonization, independence and participation within the framework of the United Nations. Other requests were also received from staff members, researchers and scholars, who wished to make effective use of the rich documentary archives of the Organization.

20. Through its retrospective digitization programme, the Library continued to upload important United Nations documents on decolonization on the Official Document System of the Organization in order to make an increasing number of documents accessible through the Internet while ensuring the preservation of the original versions. During the reporting period, 68,940 old United Nations documents (458,890 pages) were scanned, of which 16,200 (236,640 pages) were uploaded to the Official Document System, including reports of the Fourth Committee and other documents on decolonization issued between the early 1950s and the 1990s.

VI. United Nations publications

21. During the reporting period, the Department published volume 65 (2011) of the *Yearbook of the United Nations* and continued work on subsequent volumes. With its comprehensive coverage of the annual activities of the United Nations, including those related to decolonization, the *Yearbook* presented the work of the General Assembly, the Fourth Committee and the Special Committee on Decolonization, as well as general decolonization issues and the support provided by the Economic and Social Council to Non-Self-Governing Territories. The United Nations Yearbook Twitter account regularly features historical items related to decolonization.

22. The latest (2014) edition of the United Nations system handbook *Basic Facts about the United Nations* was issued in Chinese and Russian during the reporting period. The book documents the contributions of the United Nations to the decolonization processes.

23. The Department has finalized updating the leaflet entitled "What the United Nations can do to assist Non-Self-Governing Territories", which includes a brief description of the activities of various United Nations entities and bodies in support of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The updated version will be made available in both electronic and print formats in the second quarter of 2016.

VII. United Nations information centres and services

24. The global network of United Nations information centres conducted regular briefings on the history, structure and activities of the Organization, which include its work on decolonization, including the ongoing Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the United Nations trusteeship system, and the role played by the United Nations Trusteeship Council.

VIII. Conclusions

25. The process of decolonization is not yet complete. At present, 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories across the globe remain home to nearly 2 million people. The Department of Public Information, working in close collaboration with the Decolonization Unit of the Department of Political Affairs, continues to disseminate information about decolonization, using its multimedia platforms and a variety of tools. It highlights the need for immediate and full implementation of the 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The work of the Special Committee on Decolonization, which is the intergovernmental body devoted to advancing the United Nations decolonization agenda, remains at the centre of the Department's outreach activities with media, civil society and educational institutions.